Plymouth ICE FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL FESTIVAL PROGRAM

37TH ANNUAL PLYMOUTH ICE FESTIVAL

JANUARY 11–13, 2019

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Way cool

37th annual event continues to delight visitors

Downtown Plymouth turns turn into a winter wonderland filled with spectacular ice sculptures and a host of family friendly activities during the 37th annual Plymouth Ice Festival set for Jan. 11-13. The event annually brings more than 100,000 individuals to the community, according to organizer James Geitzen of JAG entertainment which produces the event.

This is Geitzen's fifth year at the helm of the event and the seventh year he has been involved in organizing and presenting the festival.

This year, he doesn't plan to make many changes in the Ice Festival, which continues to grow in both popularity and scope. The fan favorite attractions such as the Ice Playground, the DTE Energy Foundation Tubing Run, Fire and Ice Towers, and the Dueling Chain Saws Competition will all return. Coincidentally, those all happen to be favorite event of Geitzen's.

"I enjoy the whole thing, I really do," Geitzen said. "I'm really pleased it is so successful and keeps just getting bigger and better and attracting larger crowds."

This year, he expects between 100-150 sculptures throughout downtown Plymouth, many of which are displayed in front of local stores and

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Photos by Robert Lovelace

Festival from page 1

businesses.

"Businesses see an uptick in traffic during the festival as people walk by to view the carvings that local merchants have funded," Geitzen said. "This is really a cooperative effort of all the businesses and the community."

The annual Collegiate Ice Carving Competition, presented by Genisys Credit Union, will host two carving events, which will include participants from several Michigan colleges and universities. The individual competition will start at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 12. Competitors will have three hours to carve before their creations are judged by a team of expert ice carvers.

The ice-carving team competitions will take place beginning at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 13. Teams of two carvers will work together to build and sculpt their ice carving.

James Gietzen

The winners of each contest will be announced and receive trophies each day around 3 p.m.

One of the most popular family attractions of the festival, Geitzen said, is the Blue Care Network Cross-Country Skiing Zone presented by Sun and Snow. Seasoned professionals will explain the gear, help suit people up and give them the chance to experience a mini-winter wonderland on the cross-country skiing trail built in Kellogg Park.

Another highly anticipated attraction of the festival, Geitzen said, is the Ice Playground. This interactive space is filled with games carved out of ice and numerous ice sculptures providing plenty of opportunities for pictures while children play in the ice. This is simply a "must see" at the festival, he said.

He added that the festival wouldn't be complete for many local visitors without the traditional Party Lot behind E.G. Nick's restaurant on Forest Street, where there will be cold

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beer, drink specials, and live music. The Party Lot has become "The Place" to be for nightly entertainment - along with the ice bar in front of the restaurant where visitors can enjoy some Stolichnaya Vodka specialties.

This year will feature live entertainment by Smokin' Mirrors on Friday, Jan.12 and Power Play Detroit on Sat., Jan. 13

"We do a lot of festivals," Geitzen said, "but this one of my real favorites. It is a great time and a terrific excuse to get out in the cold and walk the downtown streets of Plymouth. This event benefits everybody, the visitors, the merchants, the community. Don't miss it."

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Going big

Michigan First brings huge sculpture to festival

It's a big deal.

Actually, it's the biggest deal at the Plymouth Ice Festival this year, using 20 blocks of ice and measuring about 33 by 22 feet, the huge ice sculpture is being sponsored by Michigan First Credit Union.

"This will be the largest sculpture we have had in five or six years," noted James Geitzen president of JAG Entertainment which produces the festival each year. Gietzen said he is excited about the size of the sculpture, but also about the participation of Michigan First, which is the official credit union of the Detroit Red Wings.

"Obviously, they will have a Red Wings theme to the carving," Geitzen said, but they are keeping it under wraps for now."

Tijuana Wakar of Ice Dreams in Plymouth and a team of three will be carving the sculpture, and she also declined to discuss the design.

"We are still working on it," she said. Wakar, who with husband Ted, also a champion carver, has been involved in the Plymouth festival for more than 20 years.

According to Dan Sugg, the Chief Mortgage Lending Officer at Michigan First, the theme of the sculpture will in fact be something including the Detroit Red Wings and the people at Michigan First are as excited about the sculpture as Geitzen.

"Not only our staff, but our members can take pride in presenting this at the Ice Festival," Sugg said. Michigan First has two offices in Canton Township and recently opened the mortgage lending office in Plymouth, off Kellogg Park.

"I'm a Plymouth native, so I am really excited about it," Sugg said. "We have 400 employees, eight in Plymouth, and 150,000 members across the state, many in western Wayne," he said, noting that many employees and members regularly attend the Plymouth event.

Wakar said sculptures of this size present some unique challenges but that she has years of experience with the larger designs. "It is difficult, there is lots of ice and lots of height," she said. She and her team will start on the Michigan First sculpture on Tuesday to ensure that they finish by Thursday or Friday, she noted.

In addition to the large sculpture, Ice Dreams will be carving about 50 other sculptures of various sizes for display at the festival.

"We have been working on them for some time now," Wakar said, and we have several already stored in the freezer." They will be delivered and mounted in front of local businesses and in Kellogg Park on Thursday and Friday, she said.

Tijuana Wakar of Ice Dreams will be leading a team of three carvers working on the 20-block Michigan First ice carving at the festival this year.

Viewing the huge Michigan First sculpture will not be limited to a static experience. Visitors can take a photo with the creation, post it to #mifirsticefest to enter a drawing to win a number of prizes.

"It's a unique opportunity," Sugg said.

Michigan First is also the sponsor of the petting farm and pony rides provided by Carousel Acres during the festival this year.

Again, visiting the petting farm and pony rides will have an additional attraction this year, Sugg said, as the credit union will have "elves" walking through the festival distributing "dry snow" to visitors.

The "dry snow" is actually cotton candy, Sugg explained, and is just another way for the credit union to be involved with the community event.

"We want to demonstrate our commitment to the community," Sugg said. "We think this is a great way to do it."

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Close up and personal

Petting farm and pony rides will thrill young visitors

One of the most popular attractions at the Plymouth Ice Festival this year is sure to be the pony rides for little ones provided by Carousel Acres.

"We call them the pony/unicorn rides," said Tammy Iacobelli, the owner of Carousel Acres, a family business that has been providing specialized animals for schools, parties and festivals for more than 25 years. The unicorn is actually a very cooperative pony wearing a harness with a prosthetic horn.

"Children love it," Iacobelli said.

She said the number of ponies, along with the animals she is also bringing to the festival for the petting farm, will depend on the weather. She said she never takes a chance with any of her animals getting sick or chilled.

"These are all animals we have raised here on the farm, so we understand their temperaments and nature. We won't take a chance with them," she said. She said there are lots of possibilities for animals appearing at the festival and she plans to bring a miniature horse, a donkey, some goats, a sheep or two, an alpaca and perhaps some ducks and bunnies.

"I'm just not sure yet," she said of the animals. "It always depends on the weather. For instance, the bunnies are not usually outside, so I just don't know how they might do if it is really cold."

She and her family, including her four daughters and 10 grandchildren, are all involved with the farm. "Not my daughters so much now that they are grown, but my grandchildren enjoy it," she said. Iacobelli worked in special education for 28 years before operating Carousel Acres full time.

She stressed that all the animals she brings are used to behind handled and around people.

"As I mentioned, these are all animals we have raised," she added.

Experienced and attentive staff members from Carousel Acres will be on hand at the petting farm and pony rides sponsored by Michigan First Credit Union during the ice festival this year.

She said she will send two staff members with the animals at the Ice Festival.

An arctic fox and a reindeer or caribou were possible choices for the petting farm, too, she said, but again, the weather the day of the event will dictate which animals are on site.

The pony rides and the petting farm are being sponsored this year by Michigan First Credit Union which has two branches in Canton Township and a mortgage office in Plymouth across from Kellogg Park.

Visitors to the pony rides and petting farm might also want to watch for the elves handing out "dry snow" to youngsters. The dry snow is actually cotton candy and expected to be a popular treat during the event.

Michigan First Chief Mortgage Lending Officer Dan Sugg said the 90-year-old credit union wanted to be a part of the festival and the community. Sugg said he is a Plymouth native and has attended the ice festival many times.

"We're committed to the community and wanted to show our involvement here. The ice festival seemed like a great opportunity," he said.

Michigan First also sponsored the largest ice sculpture in Kellogg Park this year using 20 blocks of ice, the largest sculpture in six years or so according to festival producer James Geitzen of JAG entertainment.

City, township officials welcome annual festival

Julie Brown
Staff Writer

When the Plymouth Ice Festival arrives this year, Plymouth City Manager Paul Sincock will be ready.

"It's part of the whole image of Plymouth. It's part of what makes Plymouth so special," said Sincock, who is also the District Governor for Rotary District 6400. "It adds a vibrancy to our town."

This year, the traditional event will come to Kellogg Park and environs Friday through Sunday, Jan. 11-13. Sincock noted Plymouth hosts some 180-200 events a year, so issues with public safety are addressed well.

"Certainly, the Ice Festival is no different. We've been doing it for many years now," said Sincock, who noted meetings to plan take place before as well as meetings to review any issues after city events.

> *I wouldn't miss it.*
> *It's a fabulous event.*
> **Paul Sincock**

"I wouldn't miss it. It's a fabulous event," the city manager said of the Ice Festival. "This is, if you will, the granddaddy of them all. There's a special feeling for the Plymouth Ice Festival. It's where it all started. You have that history."

Plymouth Township Supervisor Kurt Heise agreed the Ice Festival, which features many carved sculptures, brings the city and Plymouth Township together. "Absolutely. It also is an outstanding event for everyone in Southeast Michigan," said Heise. "It shows we are a welcoming and fun place to be. Ice Festival is a really nice fun winter event that gets people outside. Sometimes we need to do that."

Heise has a conflict during Ice Festival opening ceremonies but notes, "I'll probably swing by on Saturday or Sunday."

Sincock explained that with all events, "We do a lot of 'what ifs' and scenarios." That includes plans for safety and security, how to proceed in snowfall, and ways to accommodate traffic. Ways to bring in the blocks of ice and move them safely are planned too.

"We do this for all of our events. All of those things are part of the equation," said Sincock.

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What a ride

Ice slide adds fun to festival

Josh and Melissa Zian of Clarkston love the Plymouth Ice Festival.

"We do the Tubing Slide," said Josh, 39. "We do it because it's fun. We just developed it. You can do it year round. You don't need snow.

"We have a number of things" that make up the slide, which is about 10 feet tall. "It looks bigger because we have sides on it," he said, noting it's used "like a ski resort" with inner tubes.

"It's going to be a fun time," Josh Zian said. He and Melissa, married 18 years, have an 11-year-old son.

"We just have the slide," at Ice Festival, he said, "We just created the slide for fun. We were invited by Plymouth to come out and enjoy the time."

Lights on the slide are planned for this year but weren't used last year, he added. The rollers this year on the slide will add little "hills" or "bumps" rather than being flat.

"It adds more excitement to the ride," he said. They do a number of other events with the slide, including in summertime when lights aren't needed.

They enjoy those events, with details at the website of www.zinnovation-sllc.com.

Josh Zian's Z Innovations is a family owned and operated business bringing snow sports to the region since 2007.

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Champion at work

Olympic, world title winner displays work in Plymouth

Mother Nature is in charge.

That was the only word of caution from national, international and Olympic ice carving champion Aaron Costic about the sculptures he has designed and planned for the Plymouth Ice Festival, including an ice playground of sorts this year that will include a football toss, an elf photo sculpture, a large snowman, a sunflower and a picture frame where families can take photos.

Costic and his team of five or six sculptors from Elegant Ice Creations in Ohio will also be creating a large jumping bass sculpture and a peace sign throne for the festival this year.

This will be the 29th year Costic has been involved at the Plymouth festival, just about as long as he has been carving. His career started in culinary school, he said, when he thought he wanted to be a chef. As part of the curriculum, students were required to create or sculpt a centerpiece from edible items. He chose an ice sculpture and "apparently mine was pretty good," he said. He began to pursue ice carving seriously and joined amateur team competitions at a local college. He competed in the Plymouth amateur carving competitions before he decided to pursue his dream and became a professional carver.

"Then I competed in the professional category in Plymouth," he said.

See **Champion,** page 10

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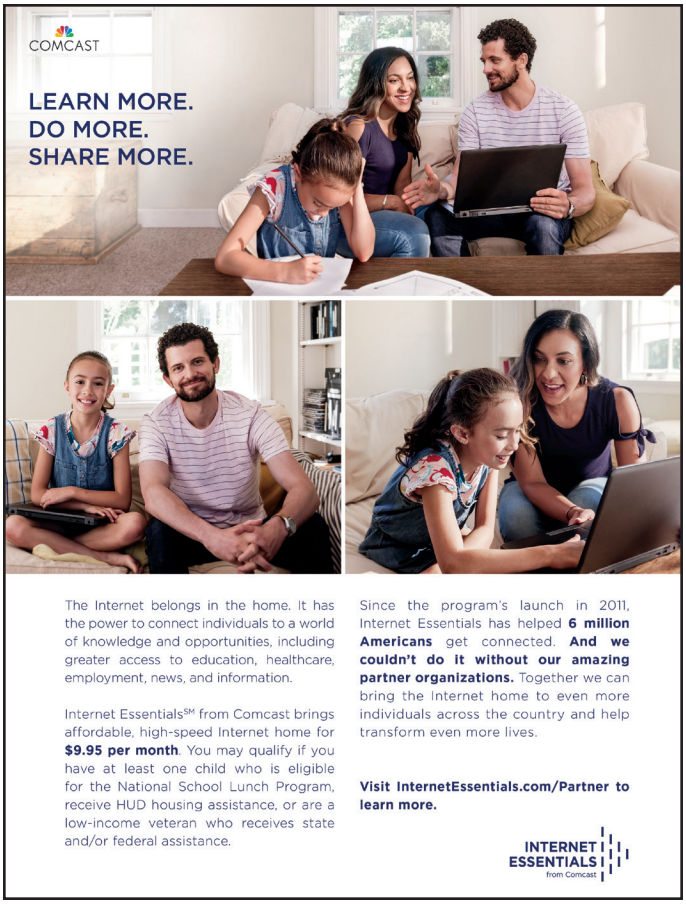
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Champion from page 9

Costic is self-taught, he said, and has "learned on the fly" during the past nearly three decades he has been carving. His business now includes teaching new carvers during Ice Carving Boot Camps and the sale of ice carving tools and equipment.

He has come a long was from delivering his first sculptured centerpieces to clients on the back of a scooter, he admits. His business is now housed in an 8,000 square foot studio and he has a total staff of about 12, but not all of them are carvers, he added.

Costic and his team won't be on hand for the Friday, Saturday and Sunday festival as they will have completed their work and traveled back to Ohio for another ice carving event.

Costic, who has won nearly every ice carving/sculpting championship title during his career and is certified as a Master Ice Carver and as a judge, won a Gold Medal at the Turino Winter Olympics and holds multiple world and national ice carving championships.

He and his team are dedicated to keeping his art good for the environment, he said. He stressed that his teams use plastic drip pans made from recycled material and everything that can be reused, like drip trays, lights and foam, is used again. They even recycle remaining ice and do not use chemicals of any kind in the process of creating the sculptures.

"But, Mother Nature is still in charge. Our only challenge is the weather," he said.

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The 'great' outdoors

Sun & Snow offering cross country ski demonstrations

Julie Brown
Staff Writer

Photos by Robert Lovelace

Rob and Heidi Parent are strong advocates for enjoying Michigan winters in the great outdoors.

"There's so much to do in winter. Snow can be a good thing," said Rob Parent, who owns Sun & Snow in downtown Plymouth with wife, Heidi. "If we can get the kids involved typically the adults will as well."

On Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 12-13, in Plymouth Kellogg Park, Sun & Snow will again host cross country skiing demonstrations during the Plymouth Ice Festival. Blue Care Network of Michigan is the event sponsor and the demonstrations will take place from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday.

"Part of our mission is to encourage participation in outdoor activities," Parent said. The Sun & Snow staff in past years has needed to shut down the skiing line at 6 p.m. due to weather and staff fatigue from demonstrating cross country skiing.

"It's more geared to kids," said Parent, noting discounted rentals from the store at Ann Arbor Trail and Main Street. He notes great places to ski close by.

"Maybury (State Park) is phenomenal and it's right in our back yard," said Parent, noting some golf courses also offer cross country ski courses.

He said it's about $18 for a person's daylong package of skis, poles and boots. Parent touts cross country skiing for its health benefits.

"Cross country skiing itself is one of the top cardio exercises. It can be a lot of fun," he said. "You're burning a lot of calories."

He described skiing ending with a bonfire for all. Rob and Heidi, Plymouth residents, have two children ages 7 and 4 who are longtime skiers.

"The younger they are the less fear they have because fears are learned," he said. "They pick it up really quickly."

Rob Parent said toddlers as young as 18 months can learn downhill skiing.

He also touts the mental health benefits related to seasonal depression disorder.

"Getting out and being active has been proven to change your mental state," he noted. He's also seen significant ski equipment upgrades that make learning to ski easier.

Parent tells of a recently widowed woman in her 80s who took up skiing and traveled to ski, "and became hooked. One day's lesson, you're out learning. If she can do it, anybody can," he said. "That's why we do these events," Parent noted of the Ice Festival demonstration in Kellogg Park.

The National Ski Patrol, founded 80 years ago in Vermont, has a website, www.nsp.org which notes, "The emergence of new snow sports like snowboarding, tubing, and snow-skating has introduced new equipment and terrain, requiring new safety and rescue techniques and emergency care methods to be developed and taught. In addition, greater access to the backcountry has brought new training and regimens for NSP members. As the leading authority of on-mountain safety, the NSP is dedicated to serving the public and outdoor recreation industry by providing education and accreditation to emergency care and safety service providers. The organization is made up of over 30,000 members serving over 650 patrols. Our members work on behalf of local ski and snowboard areas to improve the overall experience for outdoor recreationalists."

There are a number of other industry groups that encourage outdoor wintertime sports for all ages.

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Cool coach

College champion now advises team in carving competitions

Collegiate-level carving goes way back at the Plymouth Ice Festival, and Tyler Colman, an adjunct professor at Oakland Community College (OCC), remembers when it began.

"We would be carving from 11 to 2 in the morning," recalled Colman, who's in the culinary program at the Orchard Ridge OCC Campus in Farmington Hills. "It was pretty incredible what it was at one point," including carvers from Japan.

He's proud of his students, including returning carvers who will compete, Gillian Tappenden and Tica Paraday. "A pretty good track record," said Colman about OCC students, with some 10 national championships in the last 11 years.

Of Paraday and Tappenden, he noted, "They're much more important than I am," with the women training newer student carvers.

"I more coach ice carving," explained Colman, 31, who began to compete in the Plymouth Ice Festival as an OCC student. He works now with Doug Ganhs, the OCC culinary

Returning Oakland Community Collage Ice Carving Team members Gillian Tappenden and Tica Parady are expected to do well in competition this year.

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chairman, with Colman in his first semester teaching after subbing.

Colman's the executive sous chef at the Orchard Lake Country Club.

"The Country Club slows way down in the winter. That's why I like to help with the ice carving," he said.

This year, the OCC plan is for a team school sculpture.

"It is art-based," said Colman. "A lot of that comes naturally." He gives students guidance, "or even how to lay it out on ice, how to fuse pieces on. Some of that guidance comes from experience."

Colman agrees that weather matters to ice carvers. "You definitely want it to be below freezing. Worst days I've been involved in because it was warm. It's not working out to your advantage. When it's cold out you show a lot more detail in your sculpture."

Teams of carvers need more equipment in warm weather, too. Colman's students look forward to the Plymouth Ice Festival, having traveled to learn techniques.

Japanese carver Junichi Nakamura taught the OCC students, "so they're definitely super-excited for this season," said Colman.

He likes the Plymouth event.

"It's a lot of families coming out. The family dog, kids. A lot of good places to eat so you don't have to stay outside all the time, which is nice," noted Colman, a Royal Oak resident with family there.

Oakland Community College student carvers Gillian Tappenden and Tica Paraday created this dragon for competition last year.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Opening Ceremony and Ribbon Cutting

Friday, Jan. 11 at 7 p.m

The 2019 Plymouth Ice Festival will officially open with City of Plymouth Commission members in attendance to help cut the ribbon and kick off the Ice Festival celebrations.

Genisys Credit Union Collegiate Ice Carving Competitions

The 2019 Plymouth Ice Festival partners with local colleges and universities to present the Collegiate Ice Carving Competition in Kellogg Park. Watch live carvings by talented college students as they compete to win first place in their sculpture category. All judging is done by experienced and professional judges.

Saturday, Jan. 12

College Individual Carving Competition - 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Awards at 2 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 13

College Team Carving Competition - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Awards at 3 p.m.

DTE Energy Foundation Tubing Run

Plymouth Ice Festival will feature more than 100 feet of pure tubing fun. Located on Ann Arbor Trail between Main Street and Union, this family-fun attraction is sure to be one of the most popular events at the festival this year.

DTE Energy Foundation Tubing Run Hours:
Friday: 6 to 9 p.m.
Saturday: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Dueling Chainsaws Competition
Saturday, Jan.12 7 p.m.

Back by popular demand. The Dueling Chainsaws Competition. In this event, competition ice carvers are given 15 minutes, one block, and their chainsaws to create some of the most amazing ice carvings in the festival.

Ice Throne

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The Plymouth Ice Festival Ice Playground

Bring the young ones for countless photo opportunities at the all-new attraction at the Plymouth Ice Festival. The Ice Playground is packed full of interactive ice carvings. This is simply a "must see" at the festival.

Family Petting Farm

Located next to the Ice Playground, our friends at Carousel Acres will be offering a hands on experience with horses, donkeys, goats. sheep and even an alpaca . This activity is great for children or those who are young at heart. This year, the petting farm will also feature pony rides.

Saturday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - weather permitting
Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - weather Permitting

Interactive Ice Sculptures

Visitors can have their picture taken with some of the most amazing ice creations around. There are a number of opportunities to take a "selfie" with some remarkable and unique ice sculptures in Kellogg Park.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Community Financial Main Stage

The Community Financial Main Stage features live entertainment, awards ceremonies, presentations and music throughout the weekend of the festival.

Fire and Ice

See two basic elements of our world light up the night sky in downtown Plymouth. Fire and ice are combined to create a dazzling display on Friday, Jan. 11 and Saturday, Jan. 12 that is sure to impress. Towers are lit at approximately 7:30 p.m. each evening and will burn for approximately 2 hours.

Blue Care Network of Michigan Cross Country Zone

presented by
Sun and Snow Sports

Bring the family down to Kellogg Park for the opportunity to try cross-country skiing. Seasoned professionals will demonstrate and explain the gear and theory of cross-country skiing - and then give children a chance to try it for themselves. This feature is open from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

The Hot Spot Heated By Ehlers Heating & Air Conditioning

Warm up in style at the Hot Spot, heated by Ehlers Heating and Air Conditioning. Located under The Gathering directly across from Kellogg Park, The Hot Spot features local vendors, businesses, product demonstrations, a sitting area to take a load off your feet and (most importantly) lots of heat. The Hot Spot is open during all of the official open hours of the Festival.

DFCU Financial Lights the Ice

The Plymouth Ice Festival Ice Garden becomes even more magical at night, as the ice carvings glow with color. Join DFCU Financial and the Plymouth Ice Festival, each night as they light the ice. Officials will flip the switch during the opening ceremony at 7 p.m. Friday Jan. 11.

Amazing Wintertime Festival Food

One of the best things about being out in the winter is working up a great appetite. Enjoy festival favorites like elephant ears, popcorn, roasted almonds and hot chocolate. All food sales on-site can be enjoyed in the warmth of the Warming Station tables and chairs are provided all weekend long. Looking for a meal indoors? There are so many wonderful options within downtown Plymouth - from fine dining to a quick bite, candy, cookies and ice cream.

Warm up at the Plymouth Library

Friday: 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday: 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday: Noon to 5 p.m.

Party Lot at E.G. Nick's on Forest Avenue

presented by Miller Light, Sam Adams, Stoli Vodka, Valentine Vodka, Gordon Food Service, Samuel Adams, Leinenkugel's, and Coors Brewing Co.

For the biggest party in downtown Plymouth, head over to the E.G. Nick's Party Lot for cold beer, drink specials, and live music. The Party Lot has become the place to be for the evening crowd - and there is always a good time to be had. And visit the front patio to catch some heat, see an awesome ice bar and enjoy some Stolichnaya Vodka specialties.

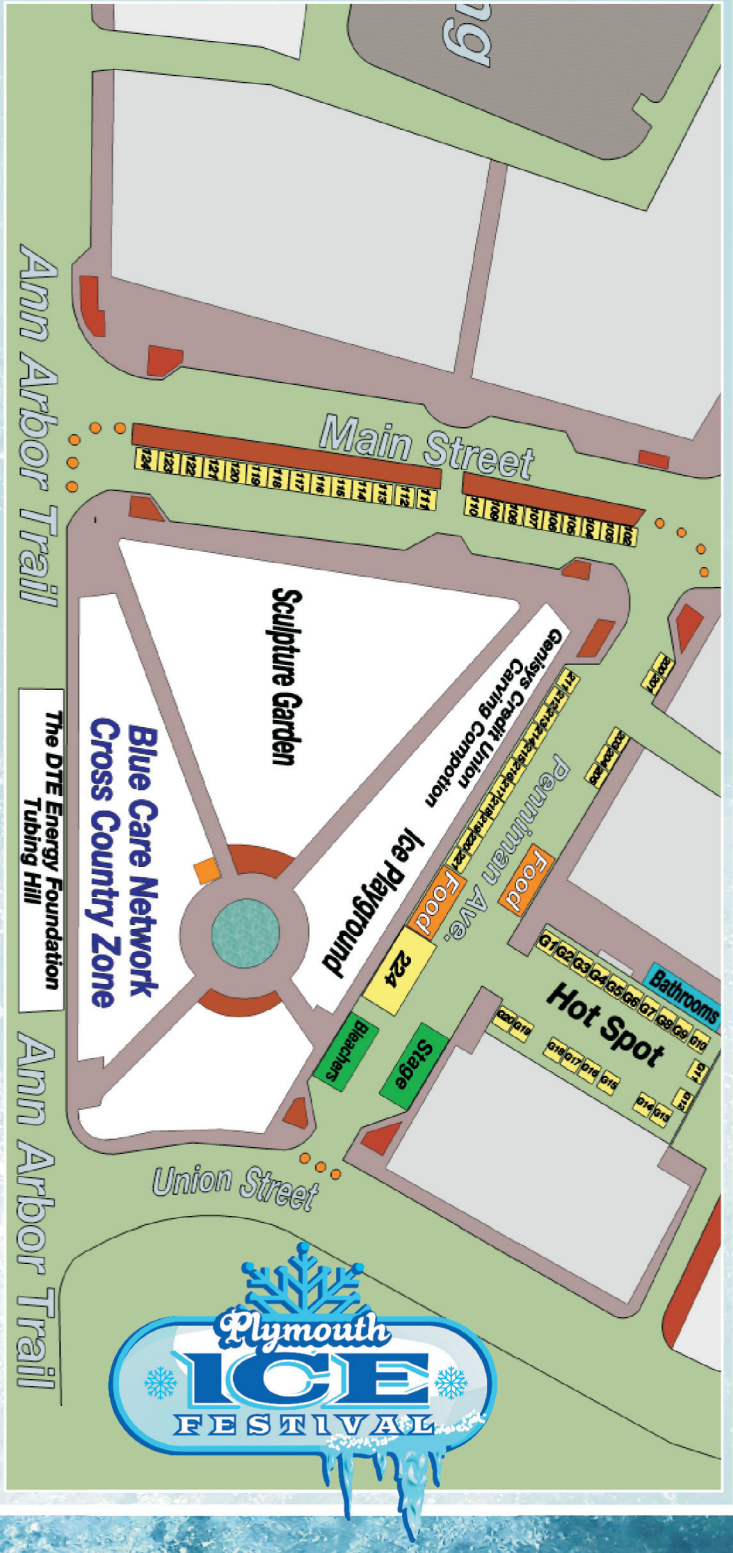
Party Lot - Hours of operation:
Friday, Jan. 11 - 7 p.m. to midnight
Saturday, Jan. 12 - 7 p.m. to midnight

Movies at the Penn Theater

Friday, Jan, 11.
Saturday, Jan. 12.
Sunday, Jan. 13

For more information on the Plymouth Ice Festival visit www.plymouthicefestival.com or follow us on social media at @PlymouthIce (Twitter) and on Facebook.

Plymouth Ice Festival



Party tent is tradition of festival fun

Power Play Detroit

It's the largest weekend-long party in the area and the hosts have as much fun as the guests.

The Party Tent behind E.G. Nick's restaurant on Forest Street has developed a regular crowd of fun loving adults who visit the Ice Festival and then enjoy the top musical talent in the huge tent erected in the parking lot.

"It's just a great time. It really is just a weekend long party," explained E.G. Nick's co-owner Frank Agostini who has been organizing the event for a decade. He said he and co-owner Tony Belli started the Party Tent "just to have some fun" and it has continued to grow into a festival tradition. Last year, Agostini estimated, about 3,000 guests were at the tent during the weekend.

"It's just a really good time," Agostini said, "and it's always a fun crowd." Fun is the operative word, he added, as there have been no problems with the crowds who fill the tent, where crowds will find beer, wine and spirits available.

"There has never been any kind of a serious problem," he said. "These people come to have a few drinks,

See **Tent,** page 20

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Tent from page 19

enjoy some really good music along with their friends. Everybody is here to have a good time."

This year the tent has been upgraded, Agostini said, to one that will hold the heat more effectively, ensuring the comfort of both the musical entertainers and the guests.

This year, Smokin' Mirrors will entertain on Friday and Power Play Detroit on Saturday. The bands typically play from 8 until midnight.

"These are enormously popular bands," Agostini said. "We have had them entertain before and the crowd really enjoys them," he said.

As usual, the $3 cover charge at the tent goes to the Vietnam Veterans group from Plymouth and Canton.

"This has become a major fundraising event for the veterans," Agostini said, "they do well at this event and at the Fall Festival. We always feel that if there is something we can do to help these guys, we want to do it."

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Warm welcome

Library offers music, crafts, hot chocolate during festival

Friends of the Plymouth Library have big plans for the crowds expected during the Plymouth Ice Festival this year.

The group will host three separate activities during the weekend of the annual festival and have something, organizers said, for all ages.

Vocalist Cynthia Kaay Bennett will perform at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12, at the library. With airplay on more than 50 radio stations in the U.S., Canada and Europe, Bennett is a well established vocalist and musician.

For two decades she has toured the country on a regular basis, performing with a wide range of musicians - jazz trios to big bands. She toured with the U.S. Continental Army Jazz Band, at gala big band events at Opryland Hotel in Nashville and events throughout the south. Bennett's vocal

See **Library,** page 22

Library from page 21

style, songwriting talent and musicianship have earned her high praise from music critics and presenters.

She was selected as one of the top 500 jazz singers of all time by noted jazz critic Scott Yanow. Bennett performs monthly at Farver's at the Croswell Opera House in Adrian.

Accompanying Bennett will be two accomplished musicians, guitarists Chris Buzzelli and Matt LoRusso. Buzzelli, formerly a faculty member at Bowling Green State University from 1984 - 2015, appears frequently in northwest Ohio. Additionally, he has served as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Michigan and Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

LoRusso has been playing guitar since 1995, having studied at Michigan State University College of Music. He currently leads his own trio in downtown Lansing, playing original compositions and arrangements, as well as jazz guitar work on stage and in the studio.

> *This event has almost become a tradition.*
>
> **Carol Champagne**

From noon until 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 13, the entire family can enjoy some hot chocolate, crafts and fun winter activities.

Activities planned are geared to children ages 5-12, but families are welcome to come along. This is a drop in event and no registration is required.

"This event has almost become a tradition," explained Carol Champagne of the library youth department. "Plymouth families hang out at the library and catch up with neighbors and friends during the festival." Family photo opportunities are available with the library Ice Festival sculpture or other bundled-up youngsters depicted in the library window paintings.

The Friends Used Book Sale is open every day that the library is open - and Ice Festival days are no exception. A well-stocked selection of children's, teen, and adult books are always available in fiction, non-fiction, history, biographies, travel, health and wellness, mystery and suspense, cookbooks, humor and more. Some music CDs and film DVDs can often be found on the shelves as well.

For more information on the library go to plymouthlibrary.org and for additional information on the Ice Festival visit plymouthicefestival.com

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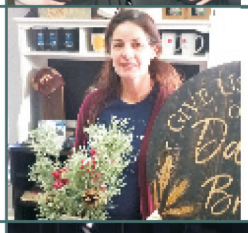

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Cold comfort

Stolchinaya Ice Bar, lounge offering unique experience

Always one of the most popular attractions at the Ice Festival, the Ice Bar will return to the deck in front of E.G.Nick's restaurant on Forest Street again this year.

The full-service (and then some) bar will be sponsored by Stoli Vodka and will feature the unusual types of drinks adult festival visitors have come to expect at the attraction.

One of those attractions is the Shot Ski, where four vodka shots are placed on a ski for four drinkers to enjoy…all at the same time.

"It's just fun," said E.G.Nick's co-owner Frank Agostini, who has added the lounge to the attractions again this year.

He installs couches, easy chairs, fireplaces and other conveniences in the section of the building adjacent to the patio for people to come in and get warm, have a drink from the ice bar, or the regular restaurant bar and just relax.

"This weekend is, for us, just a giant party," Agostini said. "We have the tent going on with live music during the evenings Friday and Saturday and the ice bar and lounge open all weekend in the front," he said.

See **Ice Bar,** page 25

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Ice Bar from page 24

This year, musical entertainment has been added in the lounge both Friday and Saturday, he said, which should add even more to the lounge atmosphere.

"People fly in from all over the country for this," he said. It's a very, very popular weekend. You just never know who you might run into."

He said that tentative plans in the lounge include a large statue of Jack Daniels (one of the lounge sponsors along with Stolichnaya Vodka) with whom folks can pose for photos.

Agostini said there is always a big crowd drawn in initially by the ice bar where they can buy and be served a drink. From there, they can go into the lounge to relax and get warm.

"We are going to try to have the carvers do the ice bar on Thursday," Agostini said, "so it is done for Friday when the crowds start."

Cool duel

Last year, professional ice carvers took their chain saws and other tools to blocks of ice for 15 minutes during the Dueling Chainsaws competition to the delight of huge crowds who watched as artistic creations emerged. The event is set for 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12 this year.

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Hot spots

Plymouth area restaurants continue to attract crowds

More than 100,000 visitors are expected on the streets of Plymouth during the 37th Annual Ice Festival. And while they are in town to view ice sculptures and enjoy the multiple attractions planned at the event, there are several other establishments that should not be missed in and around the Plymouth area.

Plymouth has become a destination spot for those seeking a special dinner or a nice lunch. And whether looking for a quick sandwich or burger or celebrating a special occasion, this is the town where serious culinary expertise is always on display. While Ice Festival visitors may be looking for a spot to get warm when it's time for a meal there is no place better suited to serving the tastes of diners.

From a fine dining establishment serving specialty beef, a beloved hamburger and pizza place where fun abounds or even ethnic fare that delights the tastes, there is no place like Plymouth for good food and great times.

Here are a few of our very favorites…Enjoy!

E.G. Nick's
500 Forest Ave.
Plymouth
(734) 414-6400

A visit to E.G. Nick's on Forest Street in Plymouth has become a tradition for Ice Festival visitors.

As has become a tradition, the Party Tent behind the restaurant will be open again this year, featuring live music from Smokin' Mirrors on Friday and Power Play on Saturday. The tent always draws a large crowd of regulars who know that this is the place to have a good time after seeing the ice sculptures, or to view one of the most unique sculptures on the front patio where a full-service ice bar provides a really "cool" experience.

The crowds join the crowd of local residents who enjoy the menu of favorite dishes along with the new dishes added regularly by Chef Frank Agostini.

E. G. Nicks also boasts an extensive list of specially-brewed craft beers and unique cocktails, along with an impressive list of premium wines. There are specialty cocktails nearly every day served at "the longest bar in Plymouth."

The menu includes crowd-favorite items like Caprese ravioli, with a pesto sauce that brings diners back again and again. The exceptional flatbread pizzas offer unique toppings like bacon, lettuce and tomato or Caesar salad along with the expected traditional pepperoni and cheeses. The unique flatbread crust on these treats has made them one of the biggest sellers on the late-night and lunch menu, Agostini said. The imaginative new dishes like the pear and spinach salad added to the menu have drawn rave reviews from regulars.

The menu still includes the customer-favorite planked whitefish, chosen as the best in the state by food critics and the award-winning spare ribs, Bang-Bang Shrimp and bourbon pot roast nachos.

Agostini said the menu includes several items which can be prepared gluten free and some vegan dishes, which are becoming more and more popular.

Local diners know that the kitchen often offers lunch specials, using fresh ingredients and weekends almost always include dinner specials, allowing Agostini to demonstrate some of the culinary creativity that he has displayed with his various TV appearances.

Greek Islands Eatery
306 South Main St.
Plymouth
(734) 335-6303

The newly-renovated Greek Island Eatery is located downtown on Main Street across from Kellogg Park. The new interior includes bar service so that patrons can enjoy beer and wine with their lunch or dinner.

The paintings of Greek gods on the high-ceilinged interior set the tone for the restaurant which offers a full menu of lunch and dinner items. The paintings are always a conversation starter at the full-service restaurant which offers an extensive menu and specialty weekend brunch dishes.

Choices on the newly redesigned menu include American favorites along with many homemade Greek specialties including moussaka, pastitsio, spinach pie and gyros. They also serve a wide array of salads, pitas, sandwiches and burgers, all at great prices.

The restaurant offers carry outs and has a banquet room and does catering.

Greek Island servers provide a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and service is always prompt and courteous and locals have come to depend on the quick service. Greek Islands is also family friendly, offering accommodations for children and families.

Hermann's Old Town Grille
195 West Liberty St.
Plymouth
(734)451-1213

Hermann's Old Town Grille is well-known to Plymouth locals and visitors alike for both the huge, drooling moose painted on the exterior wall and the exceptional menu of fresh and well-prepared food.

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This is a place that simply cannot be missed because of the exceptional atmosphere where too many unique items to list are on display along with the great food. Hermann's has been a part of the Plymouth community for decades, and for decades has been celebrated as the place to go for a good time, cold beer, a delicious burger or special menu item where fun is served as a side dish with every order.

The menu includes a full selection of specialty burgers, fresh salads, oven-baked pizza and unique sandwiches, all made to order.

The OTB (Old Town Burger) comes in a variety of configurations, all of which have made Hermann's famous. There are also special menu feature items every day.

Owners Nick and Sally Hermann pride themselves on the comfortable, eclectic atmosphere where people can enjoy themselves and relax while enjoying good company and good food.

Hermann's is open from 11 a.m. until 2 a.m. Monday through Saturday and from noon until 2 a.m. Sundays.

Karl's Cabin
6005 Gotfredson Road
Plymouth
(734) 455-8450

Built in the 1940s, Karl's Cabin is truly a Michigan Made log cabin roadhouse restaurant, bar and grill.

Located just minutes west of downtown Plymouth and just east of Ann Arbor, the restaurant is a favorite of patrons from throughout the area.

Guests can enjoy rustic charm, friendly service and a large menu including hand-cut grilled steaks, fresh seafood, BBQ, fresh pasta, big salads, burgers, artisan sandwiches and daily chef-created features. Slow-roasted prime rib is served every Friday and Saturday night. Dinners are priced from $8 to $20 while lunch prices range from $6-$15.

The chef prefers to shop locally when feasible and often brings in organic and natural foods for a substantial gluten free menu. Karl's offers 20 Michigan craft beers on draft including Bell's, Founders and Short's. The extensive wine list includes 60 wines to choose from with many wines from Michigan and more than 20 wines poured by the glass.

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Karl's entertainment includes dueling pianos and live bands on the weekends.

Karl's is highly recommended by diners as offering some of the finest meals in the area.

Reservations are recommended.

Leo's Coney Island
41496 Ann Arbor Road
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The family recipe for the famous Greek Salad dressing along with the chili and other great homemade items has been the backbone of success for Leo's Coney Island. The Stassinopoulos brothers, Leo and Pete, have built a reputation for quality food and service.

Leo's Coney Island has evolved from a limited menu offering the basics of Coney Islands, fries, burgers and Greek Salads to a wide menu.

Selections include a full line of items for the whole family including Greek specialties, breakfast, and a children's menu. Leo has made it his mission to provide the experience of a Coney Island, while also offering delicious homemade soups and family favorites.

Leo's is open from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. Sunday through Tuesday and 24 hours Wednesday through Saturdays.

P F Chang's
17905 Haggerty Road
Livonia, Mi
(248) 675-0066

With roots in Chinese cooking, the culinary landscape at P.F. Chang's stretches across Asia with diverse, culturally inspired recipes.

P.F. Chang's Livonia serves a variety of Asian-inspired dishes, including hand-rolled sushi, Vietnamese-style soups and bowls, traditional Chinese dim sum, wok-fired chicken and beef entrées, and family-style noodles and rice. All made from scratch every day.

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Farm to Wok™ food philosophy at its core, P.F. Chang's chefs hand-roll dim sum, hand chop and slice all vegetables and meats, handcraft every sauce and wok-cook each recipe, every day in every restaurant using wholesome, fresh ingredients. P.F. Chang's is known for its Chang's Lettuce Wraps, a secret Chiang family recipe that hasn't changed since the very first menu. Other signature classics include Mongolian Beef, Chang's Spicy Chicken, Crispy Honey Shrimp, and Cecilia's Dumplings.

Make a reservation to dine in for lunch, happy hour, or dinner, or order takeout online at pfchangs.com.

The Inn at St. John's
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(734) 414-0600

The Inn at St. John's is a Plymouth jewel. This breathtaking landmark is the premier location for overnight stays, gourmet dining, corporate conferences, weddings, receptions, executive meetings, charity galas, and golf outings. Metro Detroit's fourth largest hotel in terms of total meeting space, St. John's welcomes both locals and travelers to experience a blend of comfort and luxury.

For an inspired dining experience in a chic, inviting atmosphere, make a date at 5ive Restaurant, located off the hotel lobby at The Inn at St. John's. Diners can enjoy a thoughtfully selected, award-winning wine list, extensive offering of local brews and al fresco dining on the terrace in season. 5ive Restaurant is open daily, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Visit www.theinnatstjohns.com to receive emails re: wine dinners, beer dinners and other special events, Reservations at: (734) 357-5700 or www.opentable. com.

For a napkin-testing burger, visit the vintage diner-style Burger Loft, located above The Inn at St. John's Pro Shop. Making burger history since summer 2013, the Burger Loft offers a fresh take on the motif of a classic burger joint. Open during golf season from 4-9 p.m. on Mondays, and from 11:30 a.m. until 9 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. The loft is closed Sundays.

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